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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/604,533	07/29/2003	Joachim Nuetzel	FIS920020132US1	1532
29371	7590	02/02/2006	EXAMINER	
CANTOR COLBURN LLP - IBM FISHKILL 55 GRIFFIN ROAD SOUTH BLOOMFIELD, CT 06002			MITCHELL, JAMES M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2813	

DATE MAILED: 02/02/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/604,533	Applicant(s) NUETZEL	
	Examiner James M. Mitchell	Art Unit 2813	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 September 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

This office action is in response to applicant's amendment's filed September 6, 2005.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Gupta (U.S. 6,884,630) in combination with Parks (U.S. 6,815,784).

Gupta (Fig. 1, 7) discloses:

(cl. 1, 10) a method for forming an interconnect structure in a magnetic random access memory (MRAM) device, the method comprising: defining a magnetic stack layer on a lower metallization ("bottom contact electrode; Col. 2, Lines 64-65; Fig. 16) including a non-ferromagnetic layer (30) disposed between a pair of ferromagnetic layers ("bottom magnetic layer" 20, 70); defining a conductive hard mask (7) over said magnetic stack layer; and removing selected portions of said hardmask and said magnetic stack layer (Fig. 14-16), thereby creating an array of magnetic tunnel junction (MTJ) stacks, said (MTJ) stacks including remaining portions of said magnetic stack layer and said

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hardmask; wherein said hardmask forms a self aligning contact between said magnetic stack layer and an upper metallization level (80) subsequently formed above said MTJ stacks;

(cl. 2-4) depositing cap layer (9) over MTJ and exposed portions defining opening (e.g. space for item 80) where cap is an etch stop;

(cl. 5, 14) where hardmask is tantalum nitride (Col. 4, Lines 13-15);

(cl. 6, 15) and cap comprises Silicon Nitride (Col. 3, Line 21).

(cl. 7, 8, 11) where cap layer (50) over the MTJ with ILD (60) disposed over cap (50);

(cl. 12) a plurality of opening (e.g. where contact 80);

(cl. 13) with conductive material (80) filled in for an opening.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. the prior art in Parks et al. (U.S. 6,815,784) shows the MRAM between top and lower metallization to connect to underlying circuitry.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James M. Mitchell whose telephone number is (571) 272-1931. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00-4:00.


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Carl Whitehead Jr. can be reached on (571) 272-1702. The fax phone

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number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Jmm
January 8, 2006


CARL WHITEHEAD, JR.
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800